

STATEWIDE GUARDIAN AD LITEM OFFICE

Long-Range Program Plan

Fiscal Years 2007-2008 through 2011-2012

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AGENCY MISSION

We advocate for abused and neglected children in court and in the community, and impact the child welfare system, so that all children have safe, stable homes and an opportunity to reach their own unique potential.

AGENCY GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND PROJECTION TABLES

Goal 1: To provide effective advocacy for all of Florida’s abused, abandoned and neglected children.

Objective 1: Represent 32,787 children.

Primary Service Outcome

Outcome: Average number of children represented.

<u>Baseline</u>					
FY 2006/07	FY 2007/08	FY 2008/09	FY 2009/10	FY 2010/11	FY2011/12
26,500	32,787	32,787	32,787	32,787	32,787

Goal 2: Advocate for timely permanency for children.

Objective 1: Provide representation for children until permanency is achieved.

Primary Service Outcome

Outcome: Percent of cases discharged after DCF supervision is terminated.

<u>Baseline</u>					
FY 2006/07	FY 2007/08	FY 2008/09	FY 2009/10	FY 2010/11	FY2011/12
45%	48%	51%	54%	57%	60%

Goal 3: Increase number of volunteer advocates for children.

Objective 1: Increase number of new volunteers.

Primary Service Outcome

Outcome: Number of new volunteers certified as a GAL.

<u>Baseline</u>					
FY 2006/07	FY 2007/08	FY 2008/09	FY 2009/10	FY 2010/11	FY2011/12
1,464	1,537	1,614	1,695	1,780	1,869

Objective 2: Increase active volunteer base.

Primary Service Outcome

Outcome: Average number of active volunteers.

<u>Baseline</u>					
FY 2006/07	FY 2007/08	FY 2008/09	FY 2009/10	FY 2010/11	FY2011/12
5,057	5,209	5,365	5,526	5,692	5,863

LINKAGE TO THE GOVERNOR'S PRIORITIES

Governor Jeb Bush has established priorities for his administration to better serve Floridians. As shown below, direct linkages exist between the priorities of Governor Bush and the goals set out in this plan.

PRIORITY #1 - IMPROVE EDUCATION

GAL Program Goal 1: To provide effective advocacy for all of Florida's abused, abandoned and neglected children.

PRIORITY #2 - STRENGTHEN FAMILIES

GAL Program Goal 1: To provide effective advocacy for all of Florida's abused, abandoned and neglected children.

GAL Program Goal 2: Advocate for timely permanency of children.

GAL Program Goal 3: Increase number of volunteer advocates for children.

PRIORITY #5 - CREATE A SMALLER, MORE EFFECTIVE, MORE EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT

GAL Program Goal 3: Increase number of volunteer advocates for children.

PRIORITY #6 - QUALITY OF LIFE

GAL Program Goal 2: Advocate for timely permanency of children.

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

The Guardian ad Litem Program was established in Florida in 1980 to represent the best interests of abused and neglected children involved in court proceedings. There are 21 local Guardian ad Litem programs in the 20 judicial circuits in Florida. On January 1, 2004, the Statewide Guardian ad Litem Office was created to provide the infrastructure to increase functionality and standardization among the existing programs. Since then, an Annual Report has been filed each year which describes the environment, issues and strategies employed to address our basic mission to represent all dependent children, as defined within Chapter 39 of the Florida Statutes. Our next annual report will be filed on October 2, 2006. Reviewers are invited to read that report and contact the Statewide Office with any questions. Our vision is to provide effective advocacy for all of Florida's abused and neglected children. In an effort to fulfill our vision, we are leveraging state, county and private funds to meet the needs of the children we represent.

Chapter 39, Florida Statutes, addresses proceedings relating to abused and neglected children and requires the appointment of a guardian ad litem for every child. Section 39.8296, Florida Statutes, created the State Office as an independent entity within the Justice Administrative Commission.

The State Office has oversight responsibility for, and provides technical assistance to all guardian ad litem and attorney ad litem programs located within the judicial circuits. Responsibilities include collecting, reporting and tracking reliable case data, reviewing the programs in Florida and in other states, developing statewide performance measures and standards, forming a training committee and developing a training program, reviewing various funding sources, and developing methods to improve delivery of program services.

Our outcome measures will be affected by the following emerging trends and conditions:

- To represent 100% of Florida's abused and neglected children; we estimate that on December, 31, 2006, we will represent 32,787 children, of the estimated 43,765 children needing representation. Our staff will, by that date, be working at 100% of their capacity to represent those children. To further close that gap, additional staff and volunteers will be needed.
- The Program will continue to work with field office staff to clarify and improve local recruiting efforts, and to help local programs identify corporate, faith-based and local governmental sources for additional recruits. We will also work closely with an emerging group of local and statewide not-for-profit organizations to solicit their aid in supporting this campaign to recruit more volunteers.
- Chapter 39, Florida Statutes, was substantially revised in the 2006 Legislative Session, and could significantly improve outcomes for children in a qualitative way and with a higher sense of urgency. Permanent placement options for children were more closely aligned with Federal guidelines as were requirements for termination of parental rights, case plans and adoptions. These changes will enable the Guardian ad Litem Program to work through the court system to expedite permanency and achieve better outcomes for the children we serve.

EXHIBIT I: AGENCY WORKFORCE PLAN

Fiscal Years	Total FTE Reductions	Description of Reduction Issue	Positions per Issue	Impact of Reduction
FY 2007-08	0			
FY 2008-09	0			
Total*	0			

**to equal remainder of target*

EXHIBIT II: PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND STANDARDS

Department: Justice Administrative Commission	Department No.: 21
Program: Statewide Guardian ad Litem Program	Code: 21300000
Service/Budget Entity: PGM: Stw/Guardian ad Litem	Code: 21310000

Note: Approved primary service outcomes must be listed first.

Approved Performance Measures for FY2006-07 (Words)	Approved Prior Year Standard FY2005-06 (Numbers)	Prior Year Actual FY2005-06 (Numbers)	Approved Standards for FY2006-07 (Numbers)	Requested FY2007-08 Standard (Numbers)
Average number of children represented	24,285	25,899	26,500	32,787
Percent of cases discharged after DCF supervision is terminated	33%	42%	45%	48%
Number of new volunteers certified as a GAL	1,450	1,929	1,464	1,537
Average number of active volunteers	n/a	5,182	5,057	5,209

EXHIBIT III: PERFORMANCE MEASURE ASSESSMENT

Department: Justice Administrative Commission
Program: Statewide Guardian ad Litem Program
Service/Budget Entity: PRG: Stw/Guardian ad Litem
Measure: All performance measure standards met.

Action:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Performance Assessment of <u>Outcome</u> Measure | <input type="checkbox"/> Revision of Measure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Performance Assessment of <u>Output</u> Measure | <input type="checkbox"/> Deletion of Measure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adjustment of GAA Performance Standards | |

Approved Standard	Actual Performance Results	Difference (Over/Under)	Percent Difference

Factors Accounting for the Difference

Internal Factors (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Factors | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Capacity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competing Priorities | <input type="checkbox"/> Level of Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Previous Estimate Incorrect | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |

Explanation:

External Factors (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resources Unavailable | <input type="checkbox"/> Technological Problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal/Legislative Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Disaster |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Target Population Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This Program/Service Cannot Fix the Problem | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Current Laws are working against the Agency Mission | |

Explanation:

Management Efforts to Address Differences/Problems (check all that apply)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |

Recommendations:

LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Justice Administrative Commission

Program: Statewide Guardian ad Litem Program

Service/Budget Entity: PRG: Stw/Guardian ad Litem

Measure: All performance measures.

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure not previously approved or for which validity, reliability and/or methodology information has not been provided.
- Other.

Data Sources and Methodology:

The data source for these measures are numbers tracked by each of the 21 Guardian ad Litem offices residing in the 20 judicial circuits. Each office records and reports, as of the last day of the month: the total number of children represented, the number of children where the Program is discharged and reasons for discharge, the monthly number of new volunteers certified and the total number of active volunteers. These reports are combined to produce the statewide report that supports the standards.

Validity:

The methodology for collecting and reporting the data supporting all performance measures is an accurate approach to data collection.

Reliability:

The methodology is sound and consistent. Although minor issues remain regarding data collection, the Program feels confident that the process is dependable and will result in consistent information from year to year.

EXHIBIT V: IDENTIFICATION OF ASSOCIATED ACTIVITY CONTRIBUTING TO PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measure Number	Approved Performance Measures for FY 2006-07 (Words)		Associated Activities Title
1	Average number of children represented		Represent children
2	Percent of cases discharged after DCF supervision is terminated		Represent children
3	Number of new volunteers certified as a GAL		Represent children
4	Average number of active volunteers		Represent children